

Men Who Compose Tariff Board, Whose Forthcoming Report Will Be Guide for President Taft

Commission Consists of One Republican, One Democrat and Three Alleged Non-Party Men.

How Data Is Being Collected

BY JOHN ELPRETH WATKINS.
Washington, D. C., October 14.—You are reading much these days about the tariff board upon whose findings—now nearly due—President Taft asked Congress to base new woolen and cotton tariff bills, replacing those which he lately vetoed.

This board now has the commercial world by the ears, and its specifications for tinkering the tariff upon our chief textile fabrics are being awaited with interest by our wool and cotton growers and importers, our manufacturers, sellers and wearers of clothes, which last named class constitutes a considerable proportion of our population.

The tariff board has been damned and lauded up and down and across the land since the famous Taft vetoes were uttered. Some of its critics have branded it as a board of Mr. Taft's hirelings and clerks, used as a mere pretext to delay tariff reduction. But the President, during his swing around the circle, has praised it as a non-partisan body "under instructions to draw their conclusions without respect to their effect."

How It Came to Be.
The board came into being in this way: Our commercial bodies formed an association which induced the last Congress, in its final session, to pass, through both houses, a bill providing for a permanent non-partisan tariff commission, which should investigate the difference of the cost of production at home and abroad and report this to Congress as a scientific basis for further tariff tinkering. But although receiving the majority vote of both houses, this bill before it could go through the conference stage was killed by a filibuster. Yet the appropriation for a special tariff board, already at work, was extended by Congress, and this special board the President gave the membership and duties intended for the permanent commission. It was increased from three to five members, only two of whom, he contends, could really be termed members of a political party.

One of these, a Democrat, is a former Congressman, and the other, a Republican, was appointed assistant secretary of the Treasury by Roosevelt. Of the other three, forming a majority, two are professors of political economy and the remaining member is the editor of an agricultural journal who has made a hobby.

Those five men were at once set to work at the task of investigating the



PROF. THOMAS W. PAGE.

difference in the cost of producing, at home and abroad, those articles whose tariff rates were the subject of the most general criticism. The board has its headquarters in the Treasury Department building and about 130 people are on its pay rolls. It is expending about a quarter of a million dollars per year to conduct its investigations—which expenditure, the President says, would go for naught, had he signed the recent tariff bills.

The Learned Professors.
The chairman of the board is Professor Henry Crosby Emery, who, when appointed, was professor of political economy at Yale. He is a native of Maine, only thirty-eight years old, who after taking degrees at Bowdoin, Harvard and Columbia—including a Ph. D. at the last named—completed his studies at the University of Berlin. He is the author of an economic treatise, "Speculation on Stocks and Produce Exchanges," and of other works. He comes of a family distinguished in educational circles, his father having been a professor at Bowdoin, and his sister the dean of the Women's College, Brown University, until her marriage a few years ago to Francis Greenleaf Allison, professor of classical philology at Brown. The father is now chief justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Maine.

The other professor of political economy on the board is Dr. Thomas W. Page of the University of Virginia. He, too, has gone in for the higher education at home and abroad. After graduating at the University of Virginia, he took his Ph. D. at Leipzig, and pursued post-graduate studies also at the Universities of Oxford and Paris. Before returning to his alma mater he was a professor at the University of California and of Texas. He is forty-three years old, and it might be said



ALVIN HOWARD SANDERS.



THOMAS W. BRAHANEY, Executive Secretary.

that his Southern viewpoint balances his brother economist's—Chairman Emery's—Northern point of view concerning things economic.

Another Is an Editor.
The editor on the board is a Middle Westerner, Alvin Howard Sanders, of Chicago, whom every stockman knows as the editor of the *Breeders' Gazette*. He was born in Iowa fifty-one years ago, and after graduating in law at the University of Chicago went to work on the journal that he now publishes.



PROF. HENRY CROSBY EMERY, Chairman.



JAMES BURTON REYNOLDS.

He was our commissioner to the Paris Exposition in 1900, and in recognition of his services to stock raisers, Belgium had him made a "Chevalier of the Order of Leopold." His knowledge of the tariff has been gained during years devoted to various movements for the promotion of reciprocity with foreign countries. When appointed to the tariff board he was chairman of the American Reciprocal Tariff League. The two party men on the board are James Burton Reynolds, a Republican, of Massachusetts, and William M. Howard, a Democrat, of Georgia. After graduating with honors at Dartmouth, Reynolds became a newspaper reporter, Washington correspondent and editorial writer on a New York daily. After he had served nine years as secretary of the Republican State Committee of Massachusetts, President Roosevelt appointed him Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, in charge of the customs houses, which collect the tariff. He was also sent abroad by Mr. Roosevelt as chairman of a commission to consider trade relations with France, Germany, Austria and Great Britain. President Taft retained him in charge of the customs service, and selected him for the tariff board because of his practical knowledge of customs, administration and foreign trade relations.

A Smithsonian Regent.
His Democratic colleague, Mr. Howard, is a Ph. B. of the University of Georgia, a former solicitor-general of the Northern judicial circuit of that State, and a regent of the Smithsonian Institution. When appointed to the tariff board he had just completed his fourteenth year in the House, where he had been ranking Democratic member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. He is fifty-three years old.

Such as the five men who, when Congress meets—now in a few weeks—will lay before it the data upon which President Taft will ask the Senate and House to base new bills revising the woolen and cotton schedules.

The administrative detail of the board is in charge of an executive secretary, Thomas W. Brahaney, a native of Madison, Wis., and graduate of the University of that State, who, after doing political reporting in his State Legislature, served at the national Capitol as secretary to his home Senators, Quaker and Spooner, and also as a press gallery correspondent, covering the tariff issue.

To be abreast of the times, in these days when this tariff board is right in the center of the spotlight, you should know how it is gathering these data, which are sure to cause a furor in Congress soon after that body meets.

Seeing the Wheels Go Round.
I visited the board's headquarters yesterday and was shown the various details of the modus operandi—the cogs of the complicated machinery which is grinding out the long-heralded statistics on the "difference of cost of production at home and abroad."

The investigation of the wool and woolen industry commenced a year ago, when there were sent out to visit the raw wool growers of the East and West a corps of fifteen special agents directed by a sheep expert of the Department of Agriculture. Among these agents were professor of sheep husbandry in the agricultural colleges and government bureaus, also expert cost accountants, capable of taking the growers' books and readily working out the cost of growing wool. The information thus obtained from the growers' records was recorded in the uniform forms of printed blanks, each of which later went to the board's statistician bearing an identification number instead of the name of the grower, who thus was relieved of any dread of having the details of his business made public. From five to six thousand growers in the principal wool-producing States were thus covered, each furnishing data under twenty-five different headings.

Following the Shearing Season.
Through the great wool-growing belt of the West these agents, starting in Texas, went North with the shearing season until they reached the Canadian border. Such factors as the effect on cost of grazing sheep in the national forests and losses due to wolves



WILLIAM M. HOWARD.

and other animals preying upon flocks were gathered.

A dozen agents have been scattered among our woolen mills, large and small, well equipped and poorly equipped. They have been going into such problems as "output per man per machine per minute."

From merchants, jobbers and other dealers have been gathered, in the open market, several hundred samples of typical cloths from which have been selected a hundred standard samples ranging from fancy to cheap woolsens and worsted, "men's" and "women's." These samples the board has had analyzed at two of the big textile schools and by one of its own experts, and the tops of agents, each with a set of samples, has been going among manufacturers showing the analyses and obtaining an estimate of the cost of reproducing 1,000 yards of the same cloths.

To check up on the manufacturers' estimates the agents—most of them textile experts—have gone into the mills and examined both the processes of manufacture and the companies' books. Then the various mills which turned out the original samples are visited and the actual cost is obtained. And all of these mill data finally go through the hands of two men—an expert accountant and a retired woolen manufacturer—who sift the figures and make special inquiries where they find evidences of abnormal cost.

Study Ready-Made Clothes.
The big ready-made clothing manufacturers have been visited by another corps of six special agents, who in those establishments have been figuring on cost of production. Two agents have been collecting similar information in the carpet factories, and two others have been covering the knitting mills in the same way. Thus have been collected the data on the cost of manufactured woolsens at home.

The cost of our cotton, raw and manufactured, has been as carefully obtained by agents and experts sent

out to scan the books of the growers and manufacturers, and to make investigations on their own hook. They have finished their work in the cotton fields and mills of the South, and a corps of twenty-five cotton experts, expert accountants and trained investigators are now investigating North Carolina mills. This field work is being assisted by a former special agent of the Bureau of Corporations. The compilation of their statistics is in charge of an expert, who has installed cost accounting systems in some of the largest cotton mills of the South.

Experts Scattered Abroad.
To get figures of the cost of production abroad to be compared with the figures gathered at home, special agents have been sent through the great wool-growing countries—Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, France and Germany. They have also gone into the big foreign woolen and knitting mills, clothing and carpet factories. Others have as systematically covered the foreign cotton plantations and the cotton mills of Germany, France and Belgium. They have been reproducing abroad what their brother agents have been doing at home, and have worked with the same samples and blank forms. Chairman Emery went abroad with them and personally started them going. From foreign regions producing and manufacturing wool and cotton on a small scale our consuls have gathered the data for the board.

These American and foreign figures are being reduced to comparative tables, which will show Congressmen the board's findings as to the difference in cost of production at home and abroad. The national platform on which President Taft was elected proclaimed the doctrine of imposing such tariff duties "as will equal the difference between the cost of production at home and abroad, together with a reasonable profit to American industries." And the last Democratic national platform declared for a tariff for revenue only, and the placing upon the free list of articles entering into competition with trust-controlled products.

In the administration's opinion the figures being prepared by the tariff board are the first scientifically compiled data ever offered as a basis for tariff legislation, and compared with which the information on which the Ways and Means Committee based the schedules of the recently vetoed tariff acts was pure guesswork.

After completing the report on wool and cotton the board will take up the metal and leather schedules of the Payne law.

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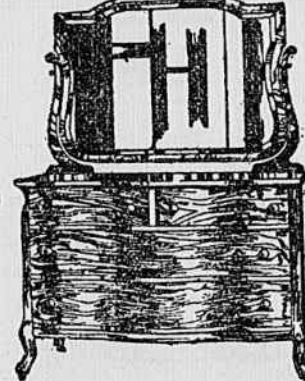
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